

served as the ranking Republican on what was then the Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee, which is why I am so glad we are marking his life's work by dedicating this post office in his memory. I knew Hiram Fong, and I found him to be a man of great integrity. He was a compassionate advocate for civil rights and workers' rights, and throughout his 20 years of service in Congress, Senator Fong personified the spirit of bipartisan cooperation. He was instrumental in enacting landmark civil rights legislation; reforming U.S. immigration laws to end discrimination against Asian immigrants; improving job training programs for workers; and fighting for equal pay for women. The people of Hawaii were truly fortunate to have been represented by Hiram Fong.

This son of Hawaii passed away on August 18, 2004, at the age of 97, followed by his wife Ellyn on March 25 of this year. Hiram and Ellyn are survived by 4 children, Hiram, Jr., Rodney, Marvin, and Mari-Ellen; 10 grandchildren; and 2 great-grandchildren. As we remember our good friend, Hiram Fong, on this Admissions Day, I ask my Senate colleagues and the people of Hawaii to pause for a moment to remember all he did on behalf of the Nation and his beloved Aloha State.

Mr. President, as the former chairman of the Senate Postal Subcommittee, I was proud to introduce the legislation designating the Kapalama Post Office in memory of my friend, Senator Hiram Fong. The Senate passed my bill, S. 2089, by unanimous consent on March 3 of this year; the House of Representatives took action on March 7; and on March 20, the President signed the bill, which is now Public Law 109-203.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT REAUTHORIZATION AND AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2006

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, one week ago, I stood behind President Bush as he signed the Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 into law. The President gave a short speech about the importance of the legislation and his commitment to defending it. He even distributed a letter to all those in attendance celebrating this reauthorization. In his letter he acknowledged that "further work remains in the fight against injustice, and each generation has a responsibility to write a new chapter in the unfinished story of freedom." I ask unanimous consent to insert his letter into the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. (See exhibit 1).

Mr. LEAHY. Keeping the Voting Rights Act intact is important, but enforcing it is equally important. Now that Congress has passed the law—and the President has signed it—it is up to the President to ensure that this law and all of its provisions are enforced

fully and faithfully. I was pleased last Thursday to hear the President commit to aggressive enforcement and to defend the Act from legal attacks. Article I of the Constitution provides for the Congress to write the laws, and Article II provides for the President to enforce them. Congress has done its part, and now the President must do his. I commended him for saying that he will.

Last week I spoke to the Senate about a letter I had sent to the President in which I urged him not to follow his usual practice of signing a bill with his fingers crossed behind his back and later issuing a presidential signing statement undercutting the law that Congress passed. I return today to report to the Senate that, to the best of my knowledge, the President has accepted that advice and has not issued an after-the-fact signing statement. I thank the President for following this course. In fact, the material posted on the White House website includes a "fact sheet" in which the White House reaffirms the President's commitment "to vigorously enforce the provisions of the law and to defend it in court."

The Voting Rights Act is the keystone in the foundation of civil rights laws and is one of the most important methods of protecting all Americans' foundational right to vote. Several generations have kept the chain of support for the Voting Rights Act unbroken, and now we have once again done our part to continue that legacy and revitalize the Act.

We know that effective enforcement of these provisions is vital in fighting against discrimination that, unfortunately, still exists in this nation today. As the President has acknowledged, the wound is not healed and there is more to do to protect the rights of all Americans to vote and have their votes count.

I also note for the record that today, two weeks after final passage of the House bill to reauthorize and revitalize the Voting Rights Act, and one week after the President signed that historic legislation into law, copies of Senate Report 109-295 have finally been printed. This is the committee report on S.2703 that I commented on during my statement to the Senate on July 27. It contains the objection of all eight Democratic members of the committee. As previously noted, it is unusual in that it does not represent the views of a majority of the committee and certainly does not represent the views of the Democratic sponsors of that Senate legislation.

EXHIBIT 1

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, July 27, 2006.

I send greetings to those celebrating the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Voting Rights Act is one of the most important pieces of legislation in our Nation's history. It has been vital to guaranteeing the right to vote for generations of Americans and has helped millions of our citizens enjoy the full promise of freedom. By refusing to give in to discrimination and

segregation, heroes of the Civil Rights Movement called our country back to its founding ideals of freedom and opportunity for everyone. Leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., and Thurgood Marshall believed in the constitutional guarantees of liberty and equality and trusted their fellow Americans to do the right thing to ensure these blessings for every man, woman, and child.

Over the years, our Nation has grown more prosperous and powerful, and it has also grown more equal and just. Yet, further work remains in the fight against injustice, and each generation has a responsibility to write a new chapter in the unfinished story of freedom. Reauthorizing this legislation is an example of our continued commitment to a united America where every person is valued and treated with dignity and respect.

America is grateful for the sacrifices of citizens such as Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King, after whom the bill reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act was named. I also appreciate the members of the House and Senate for passing this historic legislation. By working together, we can help build an America that lives up to our guiding principle that all men and women are created equal.

Laura and I send our best wishes on this special occasion.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DEREK JAMES PLOWMAN

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a brave young man from Arkansas who lost his life while serving our Nation in uniform. PFC Derek James Plowman is remembered by those who knew him best as a compassionate soul, who was always quick to bring a smile to the faces of those around him. Having grown up in a large family that was often filled with laughter, he quickly became the life of every party, developing a special gift for being at ease in large groups and brightening the spirits of the people he came in contact with.

Shortly after moving to northwest Arkansas from Florida in 2004, Private First Class Plowman graduated from Valley Springs High School. Hoping to study psychology some day, he enlisted in the Arkansas Army National Guard for an opportunity to earn money towards his college education. It was also an opportunity for him to serve his country, a decision that personified the selfless attitude of this young man.

In the Guard, Private First Class Plowman was a cook assigned to the 142nd Brigade, a brigade comprised of citizen soldiers from north and northwest Arkansas. Upon returning home from basic training, he was informed by one of his superior officers that he would soon be mobilized for service in Operation Iraqi Freedom. With courage and reassurance, he looked his Sergeant in the eye and said "That's OK. I signed on the dotted line and I've got a job to do."

The 142nd was mobilized for duty in Iraq on December 7, 2005, and was scheduled to return next summer. Tragically, Private First Class Plowman died from a gunshot wound on

July 20 while serving with his brigade in Baghdad. In a memorial service at Valley Springs High School, over 200 mourners gathered to pay their respects for this fallen soldier and to comfort his family. He was later laid to rest at Western Grove Cemetery in Harrison, AR.

The loss of this special young man is a sobering reminder of the tragic human cost of war. The loss of any of our brave men and women in uniform is felt by not only their friends and loved ones but also by communities and families across our Nation that they fought to defend.

Words cannot adequately express the sorrow felt in the hearts of the family and loved ones of Derek Plowman, but I pray they can find solace in the courageous way he lived his life. My thoughts and prayers are with his mother and stepfather, Kim and Andrew Campbell, his father, Donald Plowman, his brothers and sisters, and with all those who knew and loved him.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On July 28, 2006, in Detroit, MI, Julia Lynn Marsh, a male transvestite, was physically and verbally assaulted by three men. According to sources, Marsh suffered injuries to the head after being struck by a crowbar. It appears Marsh was targeted solely because of his sexual orientation.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

GULF OF MEXICO ENERGY SECURITY ACT

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, the Senate passed one of the most important bills it has considered this year. We passed legislation that I believe is the most important thing we can do in the near-term to stabilize our energy prices and expand our energy supply.

This is American can-do legislation. With this bill, we are bringing vast reserves of American energy onshore from the American real estate that we own out in the ocean.

We are doing it safely, cleanly, and responsibly. We are bringing this clean energy onshore so our businesses can prosper, our farmers can prosper, and

American families can have much needed relief from high energy costs.

Right now, energy is on all of our minds. Oil prices continue to climb because of instability in oil rich regions. Today, oil hovers at just below \$75 a barrel. Natural gas prices are climbing because of the intense heat in many regions of our country. This week, the price jumped 11 percent in 1 day, and right now it is at \$8.05 per million Btu—that price is four times higher than it was 6 years ago.

Let me tell you why Americans care so much. Between 1999 and 2005, the price of natural gas in the United States increased by 289 percent. At the same time, we lost over 3 million U.S. jobs in the manufacturing sector.

The heat wave gripping our Nation has made energy supply and energy prices a topic of real concern for all of us. As I speak, the lights in the hallways of the Senate and House office buildings are dimmed to conserve energy during this heat wave.

I think it is fitting that during a time of strong national concern over our soaring energy prices, the Senate will pass by what I expect to be a wide margin a bill to bring 1.2 billion barrels of oil and 5.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas to market. Every once in awhile, we get it just right. This is one of those times.

I am particularly pleased that we did this bill in a way that reinvests in our environment. For decades, our coastal States have produced much of the oil and gas this Nation consumes. They will no longer sit back and go along with leasing without the compensation needed to fix the energy infrastructure and coastal environment that is so critical to our domestic energy survival.

Our coastal States provide 27 percent of our oil and 20 percent of the natural gas. MMS estimates that Gulf of Mexico production is expected to rise within the next several years to about 23 percent of our Nation's natural gas production and 40 percent of U.S. oil production.

In addition, our coastal States host nearly 50 percent of our refining infrastructure. The hurricanes last fall and the soaring energy prices afterward reminded all of us how critical the coastal States' production and infrastructure are to our energy supply.

I am pleased that today marks the beginning of the end of the days of turning our backs on our coastal States while we turn our energy dollars over to hostile regimes.

I am pleased that the bill invests a portion of our royalties in the coastal States and the coastal environment instead of forfeiting all royalties and sending that money to hostile governments to buy their energy. I hope the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act marks the beginning of the end of this long cycle of sending our dollars abroad to buy the energy we use here at home.

This bill represents America stepping up to the plate to solve our energy

problems. It opens up 8.3 million new acres to development of nearly 6 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.26 billion barrels of oil. We are talking about enough natural gas to heat and cool nearly 6 million homes for 15 years.

The proof of the substantive merits of this bill lies in its broad support around the Nation from America's agricultural community, manufacturing community, producers of chemicals and plastics, the textile industry, the utility sector, and small businesses. Literally, thousands of consumer groups representing millions of Americans and millions of American jobs say the same thing—that S. 3711 provides the much needed relief for the American people.

That is why this bill is right for America. It is right for our national security. It is right for our economy, our businesses, our farms, and our families. I am pleased at the strong support for this measure.

I thank the following Energy Committee staff for their hard work on this bill: Frank Macchiarola, Bruce Evans, Marnie Funk, Angela Harper, Kara Gleason, and Kristina Rolph.

NOMINATIONS HOLDS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the plight of countless rural communities in Oregon and across the country may take a turn for the worse due to the impending expiration of the county payments legislation. For this reason, I am putting a hold on the following two Bush nominees to express my continuing dissatisfaction with the administration's lack of attention to the needs of people in more than 700 rural counties in over 40 States: John Ray Correll, Director of the Office of Surface Mining, Interior Department and Mark Myers, Director of the U.S. Geological Services, Interior Department.

In addition, I would also object to any unanimous consent allowing Mr. Correll, Mr. Myers, and Mr. Bernhardt to remain on the calendar. Instead, I request that these three nominations be returned to the White House during the congressional August recess. Rule 31 paragraph 6 of the Senate Rules provides that when the Senate will be in recess for more than 30 days, any nomination in committee or on the Senate Calendar must be returned to the White House unless the Senate, by unanimous consent, allows a nominee to remain on the calendar.

To date, the administration has proposed only one solution to funding county payments, and it is one that many of us find unacceptable. The county payments law, which provides a stable revenue source for education, roads and other county services in rural areas, is due to expire at the end of this year. In early 2005, I cosponsored a bipartisan bill, S. 267, to reauthorize county payments for another 7